

**VOCA DEFINITION OF DIRECT SERVICES AND
ALLOWABLE SERVICES AND COSTS**

A. VOCA Definition of Direct Services

VOCA defines “services” as efforts that

- Respond to the emotional and physical needs of crime victims;
- Assist victims of crime to stabilize their lives after a victimization;
- Help victims understand and participate in the criminal justice system; and
- Provide victims of crime with a measure of safety and security.

B. VOCA Allowable Services and Costs

The following is a listing of services and costs that are allowable for support with VOCA victim assistance grant funds within a grantee's organization:

- 1) Costs that are directly related to providing direct services through staff. Such costs may consist of the following: advertising costs associated with recruiting VOCA-funded personnel; training costs for paid and volunteer staff and salaries and fringe benefits, including liability insurance.
- 2) Operating costs. Examples of allowable operating costs include supplies; equipment use fees, when supported by usage logs; printing, photocopying, and postage; brochures which describe available services; and books and other victim-related materials. VOCA funds may support administrative time to complete VOCA-required time and attendance sheets and programmatic documentation, reports, and statistics; administrative time to maintain crime victim's records and the pro-rated share of audit cost not to exceed \$1500 or 1 percent of total grant (see item C-15 below).
- 3) Repair and/or replacement of essential items. VOCA funds may be used for repair or replacement of items that contribute to maintaining a healthy and/or safe environment for crime victims such as a furnace in a shelter. Requests for expending VOCA funds for such purposes must ensure:
 - a) that the building is owned by the grantee organization and not rented or leased;
 - b) all other sources of funding have been exhausted;

- c) there is no available option for providing the service in another location;
 - d) that the cost of the repair or replacement is reasonable considering the value of the building; and
 - e) the cost of the repair or replacement is pro-rated among all sources of income.
- 4) The VOCA match calculation is based on the "total project cost" method. All funds designated as match are restricted to the same allowable expenditures as the VOCA victim assistance funds and must be expended within the grant period. Because of this requirement, grantees must maintain records which clearly show the source, the amount and period during which the match was expended. Therefore, organizations are encouraged not to commit excessive amounts of match. The formula to calculate match based on the "total project costs" method is contained in the RFP's General Instructions, under the budget section.
- 5) Victim service applicants may budget up to five percent of the total project cost for victim-related emergencies. "Emergency" is defined as any immediate financial intervention in response to a victim's basic needs such as temporary emergency shelter, food, transportation, clothing and medical care, including prescription medicine, eyeglasses or dentures. If emergency funds are budgeted, applicants selected for funding will be required to complete and submit the Emergency Fund Procedures form which will be provided with the Grant Award Forms Package.
- 6) Although a grantee cannot pay for training individuals in other organizations, staff from other organizations can attend in-service training activities that are held for the grantee's staff. VOCA funds can be used to purchase materials such as books, training manuals and videos for direct service providers within the VOCA-funded organization, and can support the costs of a trainer for in-service staff development.
- 7) VOCA funds can support costs, such as travel, meals, lodging and registration fees to attend training within the state or a similar geographic area. This limitation encourages grantees to first look for available training within their immediate geographical area, as travel costs will be minimal. However, when needed training is unavailable within the immediate geographical area, grantees may use VOCA funds to support training outside of the geographical area.
- 8) Presentations about crime victim services are allowable. The activities and costs related to materials, brochures and newspaper articles for community

or school presentations to identify crime victims and provide or refer them to needed services can be supported by VOCA funds.

- 9) Projects may include reasonable costs of printing and distributing brochures and similar announcements to describe their program's victim services and how to obtain these services.
- 10) Equipment that is necessary and essential to the delivery of direct service is an allowable cost. For example, telephones, answering machines and the use of pagers by staff and volunteers in the provision of direct victim services would be an allowable expense.
- 11) VOCA grant funds may support direct services for fraud victims such as counseling, crisis intervention, emergency food, clothing, transportation, fraud support groups, and therapy.
- 12) VOCA funds may be used to support respite care and victims with disabilities when this enables the victim to participate in criminal justice proceedings.
- 13) VOCA funds may be used for credit counseling advocacy and other special services necessary as the result of managing the practical problems created as the result of victimization by fraud.
- 14) Restitution advocacy on behalf of specific crime victims is permitted and may include the cost of purchasing, developing, printing, and distributing restitution information for victims. This may also include conducting meetings with a group of fraud victims to discuss the restitution process.
- 15) Equipment purchases permitted with VOCA funds include the use of computers, victim notification systems and related advanced technologies related to serving fraud victims.
- 16) VOCA grant administrative funds may assist fraud victims with training direct service social service workers, adult protective services providers, mental health, and medical professionals about the nature of financial fraud and responding to the needs of victims harmed by this crime. Also publications, training materials and victim service directories are also permitted particularly as it relates to informing non-English speaking victims of financial fraud.

C. Prohibited or Restricted Expenditures

The following activities are either prohibited or subject to restrictions under VOCA funding. Please review each of these carefully and do not include line item expenses in your submitted budget unless they meet the specified restrictive guidelines.

1) Community Education

General public awareness campaigns designed to raise the public's consciousness of victims issues do not qualify as direct services to crime victims and are prohibited VOCA expenses. The community education activities eligible to receive VOCA funds are limited to efforts describing direct services and how to obtain a program's assistance (e.g., publication of brochures and pamphlets, etc.).

2) Crime Prevention

Expenses for programs in which crime victims are not the sole or primary beneficiaries of funded activities are prohibited. Generalized crime prevention efforts are not allowable.

3) Lobbying, Legislative and Administrative Advocacy

Lobbying for particular victim legislation or administrative reform, whether conducted directly or indirectly, is prohibited with VOCA funds.

4) Perpetrator Rehabilitation

Perpetrator counseling and/or rehabilitation is not a direct service to a victim of crime and is not an allowable service or activity.

5) Needs Assessment, Surveys, Manuals and Protocols

The use of VOCA funds to conduct needs assessments, surveys, evaluations and studies or develop manuals and protocol is not allowable.

6) Fund Raising

Fund raising is not an allowable expense.

7) Office Expenses

Stationary, general office supplies and other such materials are not allowable items.

8) Professional Services of Doctors and Lawyers

The payment of fees for professional services rendered by lawyers and doctors is, in most instances, a prohibited expense. Victims treated for crime-related injuries are encouraged to seek reimbursement from the State Crime Victim Compensation Program for medical services rendered by doctors. This provision, however, does not prohibit direct services programs from hiring as staff, salaried medical/mental health professionals to provide on-site services to victims. This differs significantly from a case-by-case, fee-for-service type of arrangement. VOCA funds cannot be used to pay for legal representation, such as for divorces and child custody or visitation rights litigation. All other non-emergency, legal services are not allowable. Grantees are prohibited from using a majority of VOCA funds for contracted services, which contain administrative overhead, and other indirect costs included in the hourly or daily rate.

9) Witness Management and Notification Programs

Projects whose primary objectives are to improve the efficiency of a prosecutor's office and whose goals are primarily witness management and notification are identified as administrative in nature and are, therefore, prohibited expenses.

10) Criminal Justice Improvements

General criminal justice agency improvements or programs where crime victims are not the sole or primary beneficiaries are prohibited expenses.

11) Insurance

The purchase of liability insurance policies and/or fidelity bonds and the repair of buildings and vehicles are incidental expenses and are prohibited.

12) Legal Services

Prohibited services are specified in number C-8 above, under the heading "Professional Services of Doctors and Lawyers."

13) Rent

A project may charge or prorate a reasonable cost of rent under VOCA guidelines. The project shall certify in writing that the requested rental charge is consistent with the prevailing rate in the local area and shall maintain documentation in its files to support such a determination.

14) Overmatch

Project matching funds required by VOCA guidelines are subject to the same restrictions as the hard dollar allocation. Matching funds can only be used in the provision of direct services to crime victims and may not be used for administrative expenditures.

15) Audits

If the total amount of the grant is less than or equal to \$150,000, the project may budget up to \$1,500 for the financial audit cost. If the amount of the grant is greater than \$150,000, the project may budget up to one percent of the total grant for the financial audit costs.

16) Victim Training

The cost of sending individual crime victims to conferences is prohibited.

17) Prosecution

Activities directed at prosecuting an offender and/or improving the criminal justice system's effectiveness and efficiency, such as witness notification and management activities and expert testimony at a trial are not allowable expenses. Victim protection costs and victim/witness expenses, such as travel to testify in court and subsequent lodging and meal expenses, cannot be supported with VOCA funds.

18) Indirect Costs

Indirect organizational costs, such as liability insurance on buildings and vehicles, capital improvements, security guards and body guards, property losses and expenses, real estate purchases, mortgage payments and construction costs cannot be supported with VOCA funds. When a project is funded with a combination of VOCA and state funds, indirect costs must be computed using the rate specified in the General Instructions, but must be paid with state funds.

19) Reimbursements

Reimbursing crime victims for expenses incurred as a result of a crime, such as insurance deductibles, replacement of stolen property, funeral expenses, lost wages and medical bills is prohibited with VOCA assistance funds. These claims should be forwarded to the State Board of Control for victim compensation.

20) Vehicles

Grantees may use VOCA funds to purchase or lease vehicles. Justification for vehicle purchases must clearly detail need for direct service away from the office, existing unavailability of other options by grantees necessitating vehicle purchase, and a cost analysis compared to other options.

21) Health Care

VOCA victim assistance grant funds cannot support medical costs resulting from a victimization. Nursing home care, home health-care costs, in-patient treatment costs, hospital care and other types of emergency and non-emergency medical and/or dental treatment are not allowed. These claims should be forwarded to the State Board of Control for victim compensation.

22) Relocation Expenses

Relocation expenses for crime victims, such as moving expenses, security deposits on housing, ongoing rent and mortgage payments are not allowed. However VOCA funds may be used to support staff time in locating resources to assist victims with these expenses.

23) Administrative Costs

Salaries, fees and reimbursable expenses associated with administrators, board members, executive directors, consultants, coordinators and other individuals are not allowable expenses, unless these are incurred while providing direct services to crime victims.

24) Protocols

Development of protocols, interagency agreements and other working agreements that benefit crime victims are not allowable expenses.

25) Conferences

Costs of sending individual crime victims to conferences are not allowable.

26) Manuals

The development of training manuals and/or extensive training materials is not an allowable expense.

27) Training

VOCA funds cannot be used for management and administrative training for executive directors, board members and other individuals that do not provide direct services.

28) Other Restrictions

The required criminal records checks of staff, volunteers and trainees cannot be budgeted from VOCA funds.